

## CHAPTER 9. CIVILIAN TRAVEL VOUCHERS

1. GENERAL. The primary objective in the examination of travel vouchers is to determine that the travel has been performed in conformance with applicable travel regulations and authorized travel orders, and that the voucher accurately reflects the travel performed and the expenses incurred. Examiners should be ready to assist employees in the preparation of travel vouchers. Examiners shall process travel vouchers promptly. A voucher should not be held for clarification of an issue, instead doubtful items will be disallowed and the balance of the voucher will be processed for payment.
2. REFERENCES.
  - a. Civilian employee travel is authorized and reimbursement claimed in accordance with DOT 1500.6, Travel Manual (as supplemented by DOT Notices and policy memorandums), other DOT orders in the 1500 series, and supplemental OST and operating administration policies and procedures. When applicable, reference should be made to State Department regulations for employees stationed overseas and to the Joint Travel Regulations for military travel (see paragraph 112, DOT 1500.6).
  - b. Government travel directives are in a continuous state of change due to Federal Travel Regulation changes, Comptroller General decisions and policy decisions, etc. It is therefore important that travel voucher examiners be kept current when these changes are published.
3. AUTHORIZATIONS AND APPROVALS.
  - a. Authority to Perform Travel. Departmental travel authorization policy is contained in Chapter 2 of DOT 1500.6 as supplemented periodically by DOT Notices and policy memorandums. The policy directives describe the types of travel authorizations to be used and list the various categories for purpose of travel. All vouchers must clearly state the purpose of travel in consonance with the purpose categories provided. The voucher examiner should be aware of the differences between authorization and approval. Authorization is given before the travel takes place. Approval occurs after the travel is completed (see Section 3, Chapter 1, DOT 1500.6).

- b. Administrative Approval. The travel voucher must be administratively approved by a reviewing official who has knowledge of the facts relating to the travel. This will normally be the traveler's supervisor who has immediate knowledge of the travel. The approval shall be accepted as evidence that the travel was performed in accord with the travel order and that the items of expense claimed which are not previously authorized by the order are approved for reimbursement. As an integral part of assuring an adequate system of internal control, the voucher examiner must be alert for any item on the voucher or the method in which the employee performed the travel that appears questionable. If necessary, further clarification will be obtained from the travel and/or the approving official.
  - c. Approval on Vouchers. Where items of expense, such as use of special conveyances, extra fare transportation or excess baggage charges have not been authorized in the travel order, the travel voucher must be signed by a designated official who has authority to approve such expenses before reimbursement may be made.
  - d. Lists of Authorizing Officials. Voucher examiners are required to verify that persons signing as travel authorizing officials have been so designated in DOT regulations or delegation-of-authority issuances.
4. EXAMINATION OF TRAVEL ORDER AND TRAVEL VOUCHER. The travel order should be checked for completeness. Verify that items of expense claimed on the travel voucher were either authorized in the travel order or approved on the travel voucher. Annotate the travel voucher with any additional information secured from the traveler in support of amounts claimed, if such information is required. Check the travel voucher against the travel order to verify that:
- a. The number and date of the order and amendments, if any, are correctly shown on the voucher.
  - b. The dates shown for the period of travel are in accord with the approximate period shown on the order.
  - c. The name of the traveler is identical on both documents and the voucher is certified by the traveler in the same manner.
  - d. The official headquarters is the same.
  - e. The points of travel are within the scope of the order.
  - f. The voucher is signed by the proper approving official.

- g. The subsistence rate claimed does not exceed the rate authorized.
  - h. The mode of travel used is authorized on the order or approved on the voucher.
  - i. The mileage rate claimed for travel by privately owned vehicle is appropriate.
  - j. A comparative cost statement is provided when required.
  - k. Expenses in connection with change of official station are authorized.
  - l. The travel order indicates that all required agreements were furnished, or are attached, in connection with change of official station, new appointments, home leave and training.
5. VERIFICATION OF COMPLETION OF TRAVEL VOUCHERS. Instructions for preparing travel vouchers are contained in Chapter 11, DOT 1500.6. Check the following on the travel voucher:
- a. Applicable Organization. Administration, service, office, division, etc. should be shown.
  - b. Payee's name and mailing address.
  - c. Official Duty Station. This should be the traveler's official station at the end of the travel period. If the voucher covers travel in connection with a change of station, or if the duty station is other than that indicated on the last travel voucher, verify that a travel order indicating change of station has been received.
  - d. Period of Travel. The travel expenses claimed on the voucher must be incurred during an authorized period of travel directly related to the approximate period indicated on the order; and the entire period of travel must be accounted for on the voucher.
  - e. Travel Advance. If an advance of funds is outstanding, this section of the form must be completed. If the spaces are not completed, apply the amount of the voucher against the advance unless advised otherwise by the approving official.
  - f. Date and Hour of Departure and Arrival Time. If the traveler was at a temporary duty station on the first day of the period covered by the voucher, the date and hour of departure from the official duty station and the date and hour of arrival at the temporary duty station should be shown on the voucher.

- g. Transportation Requests Issued. The SF 1169b, memorandum copy of the U.S. Government Transportation Request (GTR), must be attached to and listed on the voucher. An exception to this requirement is when tickets are issued under a single GTR used as part of the automatic payment procedure. In these instances, only the GTR number needs to be on the voucher. Unused tickets or portions thereof must be attached and noted on the voucher with an explanation of the circumstances for nonuse. Verify that in listing the SF 1169b, the traveler shows the valuation of the ticket, initials of the carrier, mode and class of service, date of issuance, and points of travel. For change of station, verify that the memorandum SF 1169b shows the names and dates of birth of dependent children, if applicable. If not shown, enter the information from the voucher and transcribe to the original copy of the GTR when received.
- h. Rental of Commercial Motor Vehicles. The examination procedures for rental of commercial motor vehicles are covered in paragraph 9 of Chapter 3. The general requirements for use or rental vehicles in conjunction with official travel can be found in Section 5, Chapter 4, DOT 1500.6.
- i. Purpose of Travel. The voucher must clearly state, if not previously included in the travel order, the specific purpose of travel and be in agreement with the general purpose categories provided in Attachment 1, DOT N 1500.42, or other appropriate directive. Vouchers which do not meet this requirement should be returned without final processing.
- j. Accommodations.
  - (1) General. Travelers are entitled to transportation accommodations and service which meet reasonable and adequate quality standards for convenience, safety and comfort. Accommodation entitlements can be found in Chapter 4, DOT 1500.6.
  - (2) Other Than Air. Travelers will normally be provided accommodations not to exceed the lowest first-class rate of service via the facility used.
  - (3) Air. It is Departmental policy that all employees and others use less-than-first-class air accommodations. The circumstances for using first-class air accommodations are contained in Section 2, Chapter 4, DOT 1500.6. The authorization or approval of first-class air accommodations must be by Secretarial Officers and their deputies and Administrators and their deputies. Redlegation has not been authorized.

- (4) Contract Air Service. The GSA has contracted with certified air carriers to furnish air passenger transportation for official Government travel at reduced fares between selected city-pairs. The list of city-pairs contract airlines is published monthly by GSA. The Department's implementing directive is DOT 1500.7A, Contract Air Service. The use of noncontract air carriers requires a certification on the voucher in accordance with paragraph 9, DOT 1500.7A.
- (5) U.S. Flag Ships and Planes. The use of other than a U.S. Flag plane must be authorized on the travel order or approved on the travel voucher by an authorizing official. The use of other than a U.S. Flag ship must be supported by satisfactory proof of necessity attached to the travel voucher. See Section 1, Chapter 4, DOT 1500.6.
- k. Common Carrier Promotional Efforts. Departmental guidance for the accountability and disposition of reduced fare coupons and other promotional gratuities given by common carriers is contained in DOT 1500.8, Common Carrier Promotional Efforts, of 4-5-82. Some of the key provisions are:
  - (1) Promotional items are the property of the Government;
  - (2) Prizes, on the other hand, are the property of the employee (Comp. Gen. Decision B-199656, 7-15-81); and
  - (3) The traveler is responsible for turning in the promotional item along with the travel voucher.

## 6. SUBSISTENCE COMPUTATION.

- a. General. The Department's rules on subsistence allowances are found in Chapter 7, DOT 1500.6, as supplemented by periodic DOT notices to provide the latest approved rates. The term "subsistence allowance" as used with travel covers food, lodging and authorized miscellaneous expenses. Reimbursement categories for subsistence will normally fall under (1) per diem, (2) high rate geographical area (HRGA), or (3) actual expense under unusual circumstances. The HRGA subsistence is based on actual expenses limited to the maximum established by GSA.

- b. Location Determines Subsistence Reimbursement. The location of the temporary assignment will determine whether per diem or actual expenses are appropriate. When travel is to both a per diem area and an HRGA, or two or more HRGA's, the location of the temporary assignment where the duty is completed for the day will determine both the method and rate of reimbursement for that day.
  - c. Voucher Review. The voucher examiner must determine that the subsistence rate claimed on the voucher is in accordance with current Departmental directives and that the computation is correct.
7. MILEAGE ALLOWANCE FOR USE OF PRIVATELY OWNED CONVEYANCE. The examiner is responsible to verify that claims for reimbursement for mileage allowance are in compliance with the Department's regulations for use of privately owned conveyances found in Chapter 8, DOT 1500.6.
- a. Proper Rate. Determine that the proper rate was used to compute the mileage allowance for the type of travel involved.
  - b. Authorization and Approval. Determine that the necessary authorization or approval is provided. The use of a privately owned conveyance may be authorized or approved as advantageous to the Government or undertaken through the personal preference of the traveler. The Department's rules on "personal preference" can be found in paragraph 831, DOT 1500.6.
8. MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES. Verify claims for reimbursement for miscellaneous transportation and other expenses for compliance with DOT 1500.6. Determine that receipts are attached to the voucher, when required.
9. TRAVEL FOR TRAINING AND TO ATTEND MEETINGS. The basic authority for civilian employees to travel for training and to attend meetings is contained in 5 USC 4109, 4110. The basic authority for reductions in training and meeting travel allowances is 5 USC 4111(b). See Section 2, Chapter 9, DOT 1500.6 for Departmental guidance on meeting attendance.
- a. Authorization or Approval. Determine that the travel has been properly authorized or approved, and whether the training is at a DOT location or is "outside" training, and in the case of meetings whether all or part of the travel expenses are to be paid. If the travel involves outside training, verify that an agreement has been furnished by the employee, and all supporting documentation has been submitted.
  - b. Per Diem and Mileage Allowance. Verify the rates and computation.

- c. Movement of Household Goods. If the travel order authorizes the shipment of household goods in lieu of payment of temporary duty per diem, verify that payment is in accordance with applicable regulations.
  - d. Reduction for Contributions and Awards. If the travel order contains a statement regarding contributions or awards covering travel or transportation expenses, reduce the amount of reimbursement so that employee will receive in the aggregate from DOT and private sources no more than the amount the employee would have received from DOT alone.
10. RECEIPT REQUIREMENTS. Receipts are required to support allowable cash expenditures in excess of \$15, plus any applicable tax, and all transportation expenses (except local transportation) regardless of amount. Also, lodging receipts are generally not required when the employee is being reimbursed on a per diem basis. Receipts must be numbered consecutively commencing with No. 1 for each travel voucher. If it is impractical to obtain a receipt, an explanation of the reason therefor should be made by the traveler on the voucher and be approved by an authorizing official.
11. PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION (PCS). Verify that claims for reimbursement for change of official station travel of employee and immediate family, movement of household goods and residence transaction expenses are in accordance with applicable regulations. The basic references are:
- a. Section 2, Chapter 3, DOT 1500.6, prescribes the procedures relating to authorization and approval of PCS travel.
  - b. Chapter 5, DOT 1500.6, covers the regulations and other pertinent information relative to allowable transportation of family, and shipment of household goods, mobile homes used as residences, and privately owned conveyances.
  - c. Chapter 6, DOT 1500.6, covers other PCS-related allowances such as round trip travel to seek permanent residence quarters, temporary quarters allowances, expenses incurred in real estate and unexpired lease transactions, and allowances for miscellaneous expenses.

Note - It is important that the voucher examiner review the parts of DOT 1500.6 applicable to the PCS voucher being examined.

12. TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION IN CONNECTION WITH LEAVE BETWEEN TOURS OF DUTY.

Verify claims for reimbursement for travel and transportation for taking leave between tours of duty outside the 48 contiguous states. See Section 3, Chapter 4, DOT 1500.6. Assure that:

- a. The travel and transportation expenses were authorized in a travel order, and an agreement to serve another tour of duty at the same or another post overseas was signed by the employee.
- b. Per diem and transportation or mileage allowances were computed correctly.

13. WITHHOLDING INCOME TAX ON REIMBURSEMENT AND ALLOWANCES FOR CERTAIN EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH A PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION.

The enactment of the Tax Reform Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-172, December 30, 1969), as amended by the Tax Reform Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-455, October 4, 1976), broadened the scope of moving expenses which may, for income tax purposes, be deducted by an employee from gross income, and for which the related reimbursement or allowance is not subject to tax withholding.

- a. Federal Income Tax. Withhold Federal income tax at the rate of 20 percent on reimbursement of moving expenses within the following prescribed limitations:
  - (1) The aggregate amount reimbursed in excess of \$1,500 for a househunting trip (including per diem and the value of any transportation requests involved) and temporary quarters.
  - (2) The aggregate amount reimbursed in excess of \$3,000 for the sale and/or purchase of a residence, or lease expense, reduced by the aggregate reimbursed (not in excess of \$1,500) for the househunting trip and temporary quarters. For example, if the employee is reimbursed \$1,200 for a househunting trip and temporary quarters, any amount reimbursed over \$1,800 for the sale and/or purchase of a residence or unexpired lease would be taxable at the 20% rate.
  - (3) Allowances for miscellaneous moving expenses.



- b. State Income Tax. It is not considered practical to withhold State income tax from reimbursements and allowances involving a permanent change of station. However, the gross amount paid will be included on the W-2, Wages and Tax Statement, furnished to the proper State in accordance with existing agreement between the State and the Treasury Department. The employee will make such adjustments in his gross income as provided by the State when he files his State tax return.

c. Withholding Tax on Travel Voucher.

- (1) Compute the Federal income tax at a flat 20% rate without regard to exemptions. Show the computation on the reverse of the travel voucher or on an attached sheet. The computation shall include a listing of the items and the amounts taxable plus the total tax withheld. For example, assume the total amount of the voucher is approved for \$3,300 with \$1,000 to be applied against the employee's travel advance. The voucher consisted of the following items:

	<u>Nontaxable</u>	<u>Taxable</u>
(a) Transportation and per diem in connection with a househunting trip and temporary quarters.	\$1,200	
(b) Expenses for the sale and purchase of a residence (total \$2,100).	1,800	\$300
TOTAL	<u>\$3,000</u>	<u>\$300</u>

- (2) Enter the tax on the front of the travel voucher in the following manner:

Total verified correct for charge to appropriation(s)	\$3,300
Deduct: Federal tax (20% of \$300)	60
Applied to travel advance	1,000
Net to Traveler	<u>\$2,240</u>

- (3) The amount of the Federal income tax withheld shall be scheduled for payment to the Federal Reserve Bank for credit to the Internal Revenue Service.

d. Notification to the Payroll Office.

(1) All amounts paid as reimbursement or allowances for moving expenses should be included in the gross income of each employee involved and shall be reported on Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement. The amounts paid which were not subject to tax withholding shall be reported on Form W-2 as "wages paid subject to withholding." DOT F 2750.1 will be prepared in duplicate to convey the following required information to the payroll office for the updating of payroll records and subsequent reporting on the employee's W-2:

(a) Total Amount Taxable and Total Amount of Tax Withheld.

These amounts are obtained from the reimbursement voucher and should reflect the amount of the reimbursement that is subject to tax and the amount of tax withheld. These amounts should be shown on DOT F 2750.1 in the applicable blocks labeled (1) Amount Taxable and (2) Amount Withheld.

(b) Total Amount Not Taxable. This amount is obtained from the reimbursement voucher and represents any amount of moving expense or allowance that was reimbursed or paid to the employee which was not subject to withholding tax plus the value of any transportation requests involved. The amount not taxable should be shown on DOT F 2750.1 under "Remarks" and labeled as "Amounts not Taxable." It will include the following:

- 1 Transportation and per diem for the employee and immediate family in connection with their travel to the new duty station and transportation and temporary storage of household goods.
- 2 Transportation and per diem in connection with a househunting trip and subsistence expenses of the employee and immediate family while occupying temporary quarters up to and including \$1,500.
- 3 Expenses reimbursed for the sale and/or purchase of a residence, or lease expenses, up to and including \$3,000 reduced by the amount reimbursed (not to exceed \$1,500) for a househunting trip and temporary quarters. This means that the

total amount not taxable for househunting trip, temporary quarters, sale and/or purchase of a residence or lease expenses is limited to a total of \$3,000.

4 Distribute DOT F 2750.1 as follows:

- a Original to the payroll office for inclusion in the employee's earning record and W-2, Wage and Tax Statement.
- b Second copy to be attached to the travel voucher and filed in the employee's travel folder.

(2) Internal Revenue Service Form 4782, Employee Moving Expense Information. Internal Revenue Service regulations require all employers, public and private, when making a reimbursement or payment of moving expenses to an employee, to complete and furnish the employee an IRS Form 4782.

- (a) Preparation and Distribution of Form 4782. IRS Form 4782 will be prepared in duplicate. A separate form for the total of all reimbursements and payments made may be prepared for each employee for each official change of station made during the taxable year. As an alternative a form may be prepared for each reimbursement or payment made to an employee. In either case the form(s) will be furnished to the employee not later than January 31st for all reimbursements and payments made through December 31st of the preceding calendar year. A copy of the form(s) will be retained in the accounting office.
- (b) Source of Data for IRS Form. The form will be prepared from the original of the employee's paid travel vouchers and/or the carrier's paid invoice if a Government Bill of Lading is used. Generally, only the columns titled "Amount paid to employee" and "Total" will be used to report payments. The exception is where the employee's household goods have been shipped via GBL, in which case the applicable amount will be shown under the heading "Amount paid to a third party for benefit of employee." The "All other payments" line on the form will ordinarily be limited to the miscellaneous expense allowance provided for defraying certain costs in connection with relocating a residence.